Title: Reported closing of Kottam-Sehencottah Metre Gauge line.

SHRI CHENGARA SURENDRAN (ADOOR): Sir, the Kollam-Virudunagar metre gauge railway line has been in existence for the last 104 years. It is one of the oldest railway lines in India. This commercially important railway line connecting Kerala and Tamil Nadu is having a length of 94 kilometres. The work of conversion of this metre gauge line into broad gauge line was taken up in the year 1999. Out of the 94 kilometres, 84 kilometres come within the State of Kerala, that is, Kollam-Punalur − 44 kilometres and Punalur-Schencottah − 50 kilometres. The work in Tamil Nadu area is almost completed while that in Kerala remains incomplete. It is very unfortunate that even after seven years, the progress of work between Kollam-Punalur is very slow and no work has started between Punalur and Schencottah.

Now, the line between Kollam and Punalur is closed with effect from 1st May, 2007. In this connection, I would like to bring to the immediate attention of the Government that thousands of people from different walks of life are travelling on this route. Because of the closing of the railway line between Kollam and Punalur, these passengers are suffering very much. So, it is submitted that considering the difficulties of the public, the Government may issue a strict direction to the Railways to complete the work of gauge conversion within six months positively and also resume the rail service on the route.